

Research Article

Analysis of the Values of Preaching and Community Sincerity In the Ritual of Ruwat Dreadlocks in Dieng Kulon Village, Batur District, Banjarnegara Regency

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyse the value of preaching about sincerity as manifested in rituals Ruwat Rambut Gimbal in Dieng Kulon Village, Batur Subdistrict, Banjarnegara Regency. Using a phenomenological qualitative approach, data was obtained through observation and in-depth interviews with traditional leaders and the community. The results of the study show that the value of sincerity is reflected in various aspects of the ritual, from the preparation stage to the implementation. The sincerity of the community is evident in their sacrifice of time, energy, and materials, as well as their involvement in the stages of the ritual, such as the footsteps, cultural carnival, drying, hair cutting, and the procession of throwing the hair into Lake Balekambang. The value of sincerity is also seen in the community's willingness to fulfil the requests of children with dreadlocks before the hair cutting procession, as well as the role of religious leaders in reciting prayers to accompany the procession. This ruwatan tradition not only preserves the cultural heritage of the ancestors, but also serves as a means of cultural preaching, where the community actualises Islamic values through sincere and selfless actions.

Keywords: Da'wah sincerity; Ruwat Rambut Gimbal; Dieng tradition; Da'wah Bil-Hal; Culture And Islam

1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is an archipelagic nation rich in diversity, both in terms of ethnicity, culture, and beliefs. From Sabang to Merauke, the various ethnic groups inhabiting this region have given rise to diverse and unique cultures. Each ethnic group possesses a cultural heritage that has developed over centuries and been passed down from generation to generation. This diversity makes Indonesia a multicultural nation unlike any other in the world (Saputro et al., 2023). Culture, as a social heritage learned by society, is an inherent and inseparable part of the identity of every ethnic group in Indonesia. One of the most prominent cultures in Indonesia is Javanese culture. This is in line with the social construction theory proposed by Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1966), which states that social reality, including culture, is shaped and passed down through social interaction. In other words, traditions that grow within a community are not static, but rather the result of social agreements that are maintained and preserved from generation to generation (A. W. Wulandari & Wuryani, 2019). The Javanese are the largest ethnic group in Indonesia, possessing a unique system of values, norms, and traditions (Ajeng, 2022). One Javanese cultural tradition still preserved today is the Ruwatan Rambut Gimbal a sacred ceremony performed by the Dieng community, particularly in Dieng Kulon Village, Batur District, Banjarnegara Regency. The ruwat rambut gimbal tradition involves a ritual hair cutting ceremony for children born with naturally dreadlocks. The Dieng community believes that these children are special and have a spiritual connection to their ancestors, particularly revered figures such as Kyai Kolodete. These children are believed to carry messages from the spiritual world and must undergo the ruwatan to avoid disaster and to grow normally. Before the ruwatan ceremony, all the child's wishes must be fulfilled, as it is believed that refusing the ritual could bring disaster to the family (Sutopo & Hendriyanto, 2019).

The ruwatan procession is carried out in a solemn atmosphere, attended by traditional leaders, religious figures, and the community. This tradition demonstrates the acculturation of local culture with Islamic values. This can be seen in the use of offerings as symbols of local traditions, as well as the recitation of prayers and verses from the Quran that reflect Islamic values. Faith, morals, and worship are religious values implied in the ruwatan ritual, although they are not taught explicitly (Verolyna & Valentine, 2024). Not all children are born with dreadlocks, so they are considered special. The local community believes that these children are incarnations of a highly respected ancestor, Kyai Kolodete. Children with dreadlocks are considered to have different characteristics and behaviors than other children, so they are treated with great care and may even be pampered. They often have desires that must be fulfilled, and if they are not fulfilled, they will display

strong emotions such as anger or crying (Nurjanah, 2021).

This phenomenon can be explained through the theory of cultural acculturation proposed by Koentjaraningrat (1985). This theory explains that acculturation is a social process when two or more cultures meet, interact, and merge to produce a new form, without eliminating the original characteristics of each interacting culture. Acculturation is not merely the absorption of foreign cultures, but rather a process of adaptation that results in balance, so that elements of the old culture are preserved, while new elements are accepted to enrich the tradition. In the context of the ruwatan rambut gimbal in Dieng, this process of acculturation is evident in the fusion of ancient Javanese traditions and Islamic teachings. Elements of Javanese tradition are still preserved, such as the use of offerings, parades around the village, and traditional symbols in the hair cutting procession. These elements are a form of ancestral heritage that has been passed down from generation to generation as the cultural identity of the Dieng community. However, after Islam entered Java, this tradition was not simply abandoned. Instead, Islamic values were incorporated and integrated into the ritual, for example through communal prayers, recitation of verses from the Qur'an, recitation of sholawat, and the presence of religious leaders in the procession (Barnes, 1985).

Furthermore, the community believes that children with dreadlocks possess greater spiritual power than other children. God considers their prayers more easily answered, so they are treated with respect and attention. Furthermore, this belief compels those around them to refrain from misbehaving or being rude to them. According to (Setiyowati & Taufiq, 2024) dreadlocks are part of the sacred heritage of the Dieng people, so if they want to have them cut, they must undergo a special ritual Ruwatan Rambut Gimbal. Ruwatan itself is a ritual performed to protect children with dreadlocks from various dangers or hardships. It is believed that this ritual can remove any pain or blemishes a child may have, allowing them to grow and develop like other children. According to the people of Dieng Kulon, the ruwatan process helps children who previously had dreadlocks return to normal and live better lives without spiritual obstacles (Ridesta et al., 2022).

This tradition has existed since the 17th century, after Kyai Kolodete died. Initially, the ruwatan ritual was performed only by families, but later evolved into a mass procession. Children with dreadlocks are considered beloved by the spirits of the Dieng Plateau by the local community. Some even believe that they are treated well because they are entrusted to Nyai Roro Kidul (Ahmad, 2023). Before the ruwatan, all the wishes of the dreadlocked children must be fulfilled. The community believes that their wishes will bring suffering, illness, or even disaster to their families if not fulfilled. A day before the execution, the traditional actors make ritual pilgrimages to holy places. Water is collected from seven springs of the Dieng Plateau to be used in the procession. The children who will be treated gather at the traditional leader's house on the day of the treatment, along with women who bring offerings to be paraded around the village. As a way to ask for safety, sholawat chants and tambourine beats are played during the procession (Ad, 2022).

The procession then proceeded to the Arjuna Temple, where a mass hair-cutting ceremony was held. The children were asked to make specific requests before their hair was cut. The spirits guarding the children were believed to be the source of these requests. The ruwatan process could not be performed if the children's requests were not met, as this was believed to lead to dire consequences. The ruwatan was performed by traditional elders, witnessed by the regent and governor of Central Java, after all requirements had been met. As part of the release ritual, the cut hair was floated into a holy water source such as the Serayu River, Telaga Warna, or Telaga Balaikambang (Mulyati, 2020; Munawar, 2022; Oktaviansyah & Rahmat, 2021). The tradition of "ruwatan" (covering dreadlocks) is not only steeped in cultural significance but also embodies religious values. Values of faith, morality, and worship are implicit in the procession, such as the recitation of prayers, the recitation of Quranic verses, and the solemn attitude of the participants. These values demonstrate the acculturation of local traditions with Islamic teachings, where cultural and spiritual elements complement each other.

In addition to being explained through the theory of cultural acculturation Koentjaraningrat, (1985), social action theory Weber, (1922), and social construction theory Berger & Luckmann, (1966), the phenomenon of sincerity in the tradition of ruwatan rambut gimbal in Dieng can also be analysed through the theory of sincerity in the Islamic perspective (Hamsah, 2020). According to Al-Ghazali in *Ihya Ulumuddin*, sincerity is doing good deeds solely for Allah SWT, without expecting praise, worldly rewards, or recognition from humans. Sincerity is the main foundation in every act of worship and social action in Islam. Al-Ghazali explains that sincerity arises from a pure heart, free from *riya'* (showing off), and only expects Allah's pleasure as the ultimate goal. This view is reinforced by Imam Nawawi in *Riyadhus Shalihin*, who emphasises that even the smallest deed, if accompanied by sincerity, will be of great value in the sight of Allah. Therefore, in the context of ruwatan, the actions of the community who willingly sacrifice their time, energy, and material resources without expecting anything in return are a form of sincerity that reflects the purity of their hearts. They do not expect rewards, but believe that all these sacrifices will bring blessings and safety to the children who are being treated (Nisa, 2020).

Various previous studies have extensively discussed the dreadlocks ritual from the perspective of history, symbolic meaning, and local wisdom of the Dieng community (B. Arifin et al., 2023) However, studies specifically highlighting the value of sincerity in the implementation of this tradition are still very limited. In fact, sincerity is evident in the attitude of parents who fulfill children's requests selflessly, community participation in rituals without expecting compensation, and traditional leaders who serve voluntarily. Furthermore, the relationship between the value of sincerity in the dreadlocks ritual and the concept of Islamic da'wah has also not been widely discussed in previous studies. In fact, Islamic values such as worship, morals, and faith appear integrated in this tradition, although not packaged verbally in the form of lectures, but rather through concrete actions that reflect the principles of da'wah bil hal. Based on this, this study aims to analyze

the da'wah value of sincerity contained in the dreadlocks ritual in Dieng Kulon Village, Batur District, Banjarnegara Regency. This research is expected to broaden understanding of how Islamic values can live and be integrated into local traditions, as well as how the preaching of sincerity can be realized in the cultural practices of society.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a phenomenological type of research to analyze the values of sincerity contained in the ritual of ruwatan rambut gimbal in Dieng Kulon Village, Batur District, Banjarnegara Regency. The phenomenological approach was chosen because this study aims to understand the meaning of religious experiences and the values of sincerity experienced by individuals and communities involved in the tradition, as perceived and interpreted by themselves (Nurdianzah, 2020). The research location was determined in Dieng Kulon Village, which is the center of the implementation of the ruwatan rambut gimbal tradition. The study was conducted for several weeks in March 2025, adjusted to the time of the ruwatan ritual which is an important moment to explore the direct experiences of the participants. Data collection techniques were carried out through: 1) In-depth interviews, which were conducted semi-structured with traditional leaders, local religious figures, parents of children with dreadlocks, and members of the community who played a direct role in the ruwatan procession. 2) Participatory observation, namely the researcher was present and directly observed all stages of the ritual, starting from preparation, the procession, hair cutting, to the throwing of hair into the holy water source. 3) Documentation, in the form of field notes, audio recordings, videos, and photos of activities as a complement and support for the main data.

The main instrument in this research is the researcher himself (human instrument) who plays an active role in collecting, interpreting, and understanding field data, with the help of interview guidelines, observation notes, recording devices, and cameras. Data were analyzed using phenomenological analysis techniques, with the following steps: 1) Epoche (prejudice reduction) to remove initial assumptions. 2) Collecting descriptions of experiences from participants through in-depth interviews. 3) Horizontalization, namely identifying all important statements related to the experience. 3) Categorization and clustering of themes to organize important meanings. 4) Textural and structural descriptions, namely compiling a narrative of the experience of "what" was experienced and "how" the experience occurred. Synthesis of essence, namely formulating the deep meaning of the experience being studied. To maintain the validity of the data, source triangulation (from various sources), technical triangulation (interviews, observations, and documentation) and member checking were carried out by asking informants for confirmation regarding the accuracy of the results of the interpretation made by the researcher (R. P. Wulandari & Narulloh, 2022)

In qualitative research using a phenomenological approach, informants were selected purposively, based on specific considerations relevant to the research focus. Informants were chosen because they were considered to have knowledge, experience, and direct involvement in the practice of the dreadlock hair cleansing tradition in Dieng Kulon Village, Batur District, Banjarnegara Regency. The informants in this study included traditional figures who understand the meaning and procedures of the ritual, parents of children with dreadlocks, local residents involved in cultural activities, and the organizing committee who are familiar with the technical aspects of the ruwatan process. The diverse backgrounds of these informants are expected to provide a rich perspective in understanding the values of sincere da'wah (Islamic preaching) contained within this tradition.

Table 1. Informants involved in the research

No	Name	Age	Gender	Work	Length of Stay in Dieng	Informant's Statement
1	Mbah Sumar	-	Man	Farmer	Since birth	Traditional figures / holders of the ruwatan tradition
2	Fitri	30 years	Woman	Farmer	30 years	Mother of a dreadlocked child
3	Ananda Tiara Aiisyah Bella	25 years	Woman	Homestay business	25 years	Local residents, cultural tourism actors
4	Syifa Octa	22 years	Woman	Student	22 years	Ruwatan organizing committee

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Results

This study aims to analyze the values of sincerity in the Ruwat Rambut Gimbal ritual carried out by the people of Dieng Kulon Village. Based on a phenomenological approach, this study seeks to capture the meaning of the experiences and values felt by the practitioners and the community involved in this ritual. Ruwatan rambut gimbal is a sacred tradition performed for children with dreadlocks, who are believed to be the spiritual descendants of Mbah Kolodete. The community believes that these children will experience physical and spiritual disorders if their hair is cut carelessly or without a specific ritual. Therefore, ruwatan is a necessity that is carried out from generation to generation with various stages and requirements.

3.1.1 Description of Findings: The Manifestation of Sincerity

The findings of this study demonstrate that sincerity is not merely an abstract value, but is actually present in every stage of the ruwatan tradition. This section describes the ruwatan procession, the characteristics of children with dreadlocks, and the forms of sincerity manifested through collective practices and symbolic meaning. The ruwatan procession consists of a series of ritual stages passed down through generations. According to Mbah Sumar, a traditional leader, these stages include *napak tilas* (tracing the steps), which involves visiting sacred sites such as Tuk Bimo Lukar, Kawah Sikidang, and Sumur Jalatunda to collect holy water; a cultural procession, which involves a procession of children with dreadlocks to the Arjuna Temple Complex accompanied by offerings and traditional music; *jamanan* (bathing the child in holy water accompanied by prayers in Arabic and Javanese); and hair cutting, performed by a traditional elder accompanied by prayers, blessings, and Javanese music. The child must first accept the request. and *pelarungan*, which involves throwing cut hair into Lake Balekambang as a symbol of releasing *sukerta*. Each stage reflects the community's sincerity and spiritual orientation, combining elements of Javanese tradition with Islamic values. Children with dreadlocks are viewed as special individuals. Fitri, the mother of one of the children, explained that this condition is usually preceded by a high fever or seizures, and that the hair that grows naturally becomes matted, making it impossible to cut it in the usual way before the ruwatan procession. This condition is believed to have mystical elements, requiring the child to be purified for their safety and growth. The number of children undergoing ruwatan varies each year, typically between seven and ten during a single ruwatan period. This special status reinforces the sacred legitimacy of the tradition and explains why the community is willing to make material and emotional sacrifices for its success.

Sincerity then emerges as a central value that unites all these practices. First, the sacrifice of time and energy is evident when farmers are willing to leave their fields and even risk damaging their crops to participate in the procession (*Syifa Octa*). This action is not interpreted as a loss, but rather as a collective priority that strengthens social bonds and the ritual's legitimacy in the eyes of the community. Second, spiritual sincerity is evident in the chanting of prayers in Arabic and Javanese (Mbah Sumar), which elevates the procession from a mere cultural performance to a devotion to God. This religious element provides moral legitimacy to collective work, thereby marginalizing economic and social motives in favor of worship. Third, social cooperation reflects the relational dimension of sincerity. The preparation of offerings, the organization of the procession, and the work of the volunteer committee (Fitri) demonstrate practices of solidarity that strengthen communal identity. Sincerity here serves as a glue that fosters norms of mutual assistance and trust. Fourth, fulfilling the child's request before cutting his hair whether a doll, a bicycle, or even livestock (Mbah Sumar) is a form of obedience that simultaneously upholds the sacred status of the dreadlocked child. This obedience is believed to be a prerequisite for the validity of the procession, thus sincerity serves as a mechanism that ensures the ritual's effectiveness. Fifth, the preservation of tradition demonstrates the temporal dimension of sincerity. The awareness of the younger generation and cultural practitioners (Ananda Tiara) to continue the ruwatan ritual with good intentions proves that sincerity is not merely a situational response, but rather a value passed down across generations, ensuring that its symbolic meaning is not lost amidst social change. From these findings, sincerity in the ruwatan ritual serves as: (1) moral legitimacy, placing collective interests above individual ones; (2) social bonding, fostering practical solidarity and reducing the potential for conflict; and (3) a ritual mechanism, believed to strengthen the effectiveness of the procession through symbolic obedience. However, sincerity is also not free from tension: repeated economic sacrifices can be a burden for some families. Thus, the sustainability of this value depends heavily on the balance between sacred meaning and the material capacity of the community. The ruwatan tradition not only showcases cultural practices but also institutionalizes sincerity as a collective value that bridges faith, social structure, and the continuity of tradition.

3.1.2 Sincerity and Modernization

Ananda added that even though ruwatan is now packaged as a modern festival such as the Dieng Culture Festival, the spiritual essence is not lost: "Now there's jazz above the clouds and lanterns, but people still willingly participate in the ruwatan. The spiritual value remains strong."

3.1.3 The Views of the Speakers on the Value of Sincerity in the Ruwatan

To strengthen understanding of the preaching value of sincerity embodied in the Ruwat Rambut Gimbal ritual, this study identified and analyzed the views of four key informants who played both direct and indirect roles in the ritual's implementation. These informants included traditional leaders, parents of children with dreadlocks, local business owners, and the organizing committee. Each offered a different perspective, but all illustrated the profound value of sincerity within the Dieng Kulon community. Traditional leaders conveyed the historical and spiritual dimensions of the ruwatan ceremony, while parents of children with dreadlocks recounted the emotional and social experiences they experienced during the ceremony. Local business owners highlighted the coexistence of cultural preservation and religious values, while the ruwatan committee provided a vivid illustration of the community's enthusiasm, sacrifice, and voluntary involvement. The four speakers collectively showed that the ruwatan ritual is not only a traditional procession, but also contains the values of sincere preaching which are translated into various forms of real actions, starting from mutual cooperation, selfless

sacrifice, to sincere prayers offered for the common good.

Table 2. summary of interviewees' views

No	Name	Age	Role	The view
1	Mbah Sumar	-	Traditional figures	Explaining the origins of ruwatan, the ritual procession, and the importance of fulfilling the child's requests.
2	Fitri	30	Mother of dreadlocked child	Explaining the characteristics of children with dreadlocks, the causes, and the active role of the community in ruwatan.
3	Ananda Tiara Aisyah Bella	25	Homestay business actors	Revealing the sincerity of the community, the acculturation of culture and Islam in ruwatan, and the continuity of tradition.
4	Syifa Octa	22	Ruwatan committee	Emphasizing the role of mutual cooperation, the involvement of religious figures, and sincerity in every stage of the ritual.

3.2 Discussion

The findings from the interviews indicate that the value of sincerity in ruwatan is not an abstract concept, but rather a tangible manifestation in the community's daily practices. This sincerity is primarily reflected in saving time and energy. The residents' decision to abandon farming activities for the ceremony, even at the risk of economic loss, indicates that ruwatan is positioned as a spiritual and social priority. This demonstrates a collective orientation that prioritizes the common good over personal gain. Sincerity is also present in the spiritual dimension. Prayers in Arabic and Javanese demonstrate the fusion of local traditions with Islamic teachings, reinforcing the belief that ruwatan not only preserves ancestral culture but also embodies religious values. Thus, the spirituality of ruwatan represents cultural *da'wah* that goes hand in hand with religious practice. Furthermore, social solidarity is reflected in the community's cooperation in preparing various ritual requirements. No member of the community feels burdened, as everyone experiences a spiritual encounter to help one another. This value of intimacy in the social realm strengthens social cohesion and fosters a sense of belonging to the tradition. Sincerity is also evident in parents' willingness to fulfill their children's requests for dreadlocks. This fulfillment is not merely symbolic, but a manifestation of respect for traditional beliefs and a sign of the family's commitment to traditional rules. It reflects how sincerity is manifested in the form of voluntary material sacrifice. Finally, the community's awareness to continue preserving the ruwatan ceremony carries a broader dimension of sincerity. This tradition is carried out not solely to preserve culture, but also to preserve ancestral heritage as a means of spiritual and social education for future generations. Thus, ruwatan in Dieng Kulon can be understood as a practice of *da'wah bil-hal*, namely the transmission of Islamic values through concrete actions, where sincerity serves as the spiritual, social, and cultural foundation.

Research findings show that the ruwatan procession is not merely a cultural ritual, but is imbued with values of sincerity that clearly color the social actions of the community. When linked to Max Weber's theory of social action, community involvement in ruwatan can be categorized as meaningful action, because it is motivated by spiritual beliefs and cultural heritage. The community is willing to sacrifice time, energy, and even potential income to preserve ruwatan, which they believe to be a form of protection for children and respect for their ancestors. Here, spiritual motivation confirms that their actions are not merely instrumental, but also have a transcendental dimension. From Koentjaraningrat's perspective, community participation demonstrates a system of cultural values and norms passed down through generations. The value of sincerity manifested through sacrifice, prayer, and mutual cooperation strengthens social cohesion and demonstrates how culture serves as a guide for collective life. Thus, ruwatan not only maintains the continuity of tradition but also strengthens community identity. However, beyond this, the practice of ruwatan can be understood as a form of *Da'wah bil-Hal*, namely *da'wah* through concrete examples. First, for the community performing the ritual, sincerity in participation serves as a means of *da'wah* to themselves (internalization of values). They train themselves to subordinate personal interests to collective and spiritual interests. This process strengthens religious awareness and solidifies cultural commitment. Second, for the public or tourists witnessing the ruwatan procession, the ritual serves as *da'wah* to others (living example). The community's devotional attitude, prayers recited in Arabic and Javanese, and sincere practices of mutual cooperation convey a moral message about the harmony between spirituality, culture, and social solidarity. Thus, ruwatan can be positioned as a space where sincerity becomes a medium for *da'wah* (Islamic outreach). This value functions twofold: internally as a process of forming the community's religious character, and externally as a medium for representing Islam coexisting with local traditions. This justification for *da'wah* broadens the meaning of ruwatan from a mere cultural ritual to a means of communicating subtle religious values, grounded in sincerity, and integrated into everyday social actions.

The preaching value of sincerity in the Ruwat Rambut Gimbal ritual in Dieng Kulon is reflected in the actions, attitudes, and meanings internalized by the community in carrying out the ritual. Sincerity in Islam is not merely a selfless act, but is also closely related to the pure intention to worship and carry out religious commands with full awareness and love for God. The community's active participation, without coercion, and with considerable sacrifice, demonstrates that the value of sincerity has permeated every individual involved. They participate not only because of culture or tradition, but also because of deep spiritual conviction. They believe that performing the Ruwatan is part of maintaining harmony between humans, nature, and God. According to (Khaerunnisa et al., 2021), preaching bill of things Or preaching through example

and concrete actions has greater power than verbal preaching. This is particularly evident in the ruwatan tradition, where people not only talk about Islamic values but also directly practice them through cooperation, prayer, and sacrifice. This aligns with the findings (Hardasari & Baadilla, 2022) in *Journal of Islamic Communication*, which states that religious practices based on local traditions are more easily accepted by society because they are close to their everyday reality.

The ruwatan tradition also serves as a space for interaction between tradition and Islam. Prayers, blessings, and religious studies are an integral part of the ritual. This demonstrates that Islamic values have permeated local culture, creating a down-to-earth form of cultural da'wah. In line with research Rukaiyah et al., (2020) preserving local culture packaged in religious values can strengthen community identity and become an effective medium for preaching. (Saefulloh & Widjaya, 2023) in *Living Islam Journal* also stated that local rituals infused with Islamic values can be an effective medium for religious moderation without erasing tradition. Sincerity is also reflected in the community's willingness to preserve traditions despite the challenges of modernization. They do not reject change, but rather filter it so as not to lose the spiritual essence of ruwatan. In modern festivals such as the Dieng Culture Festival, the community maintains the ruwatan procession as the center of all activities, demonstrating the integrity of sincere values amidst change. This aligns with research in *Journal of Da'wah and Culture*, which emphasizes that local communities can adapt to religious tourism as long as spiritual values are not sacrificed. (Ismail & Osmani, 2024).

From a theological perspective, the support of religious leaders reinforces the belief that the sincerity embodied in ruwatan does not conflict with Islamic values. In fact, religious leaders consider it a form of worship if performed with pure intentions and without deviating from Islamic law. This is clear evidence that ruwatan is not merely a cultural tradition but also a spiritual practice with profound religious values. in *Journal of Studies of Religion and Society* He explained that harmony between traditional and religious figures is a strategic form of da'wah in a pluralistic society that maintains the integrity of Islamic values. (Imansyah et al., 2022) in *Journal of Islamic Da'wah Science* highlighted the importance of sincerity as the foundation of social da'wah in traditional societies. He stated that voluntary actions and mutual cooperation in religious rituals are concrete manifestations of da'wah based on love and devotion. This finding is reinforced by (Adrian & Prasetyo, 2024) in *Journal of the Indonesian Islamic Community*, which emphasizes that mutual cooperation in cultural ceremonies is not only a social tradition, but also the implementation of Islamic values in its most sincere form.

The phenomenon of sincere values in the Ruwatan Rambut Gimbak ceremony in Dieng can be explained through the theory of cultural acculturation proposed by Koentjaraningrat (1985). Acculturation explains the process of two different cultures meeting and blending without losing their respective characteristics. In the context of ruwatan, there is an integration between Javanese culture (offerings, traditional processions, processions) with Islamic values (prayer, blessings, and recitation of the holy verses of the Qur'an). This integration shows that tradition is not abandoned despite the presence of religious teachings; instead, religion enriches and provides spiritual legitimacy to traditional rituals. Thus, ruwatan not only has cultural value but also has a deep religious dimension. In addition, the phenomenon of community sincerity in participating can also be understood through Max Weber's theory of social action (1922). Weber explained that human actions can be interpreted from the motives behind them, one of which is value-oriented rational action (wertrational), namely actions carried out by considering moral, ethical, or religious values even though they may not provide material benefits. Community participation in the ruwatan ritual for example, willingly abandoning farming, bearing material losses, and even fulfilling the request of a child with dreadlocks demonstrates that their actions are based on the values of sincerity, mutual cooperation, and spiritual belief. Thus, community actions in the ruwatan ritual can be understood not solely as driven by economic or social factors, but rather by religious and cultural values believed to bring blessings.

From a cultural da'wah perspective, ruwatan can also be viewed as a form of da'wah through culture. In line with Hamsah, (2020) cultural da'wah is an adaptive approach that incorporates Islamic values into local traditions, making them more easily accepted by the community. This is reflected in the ruwatan ritual, which incorporates prayer, religious studies, and the blessing of religious figures within the traditional ritual. This form of da'wah is more down-to-earth because it occurs in a social space close to the community. Therefore, the value of sincerity reflected in the ruwatan is not only a social aspect but also a means of internalizing Islamic da'wah through culture. The community's sincerity in facing modernization, where the ruwatan ritual is maintained even though it is framed within the Dieng Cultural Festival, also demonstrates its relevance to the theory of cultural acculturation. Modern elements such as jazz music and the release of lanterns are present, but the essence of the ruwatan remains the center of the activity. This demonstrates the community's ability to filter out external elements without sacrificing core values. As emphasized by Lanang & Kosasih, (2025) local traditions imbued with Islamic values can be an effective medium for religious moderation and maintaining cultural identity.

This also aligns with the social construction theory proposed by Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1966), which states that social reality, including culture, is shaped, inherited, and legitimized through social interaction. The tradition of the dreadlocks ruwatan is not static, but rather the result of a social agreement that is continuously maintained, passed down, and reinterpreted by generations. This process of inheritance is carried out through symbols, prayers, processions, and collective community participation, so that the ruwatan remains alive despite the tide of modernization. In other words, the continuity of this tradition demonstrates the existence of a social construct that is continuously reinforced through concrete community actions, both through cultural practices (acculturation theory), value orientations (social action theory), and social interactions that preserve a shared reality (social construction theory) (Hidayatullah, 2020).

The phenomenon of sincerity in the Ruwatan Rambut Gimbak ritual in Dieng can be understood more deeply through

the theory of sincerity put forward by several figures. In the perspective of Imam al-Ghazali (Ihya Ulumuddin, 1989), sincerity is purifying one's intentions solely for Allah and avoiding all forms of hypocrisy or self-interest. For al-Ghazali, sincerity is the essence of good deeds, because deeds without sincerity will have no value in the sight of Allah (Ramadhan, 2021). In the context of ruwatan, community participation whether through prayer, offerings, or physical involvement can be interpreted as a form of sincerity born of sincere intentions, not for material gain, but for the blessing and safety of children with gimbal hair and the community as a whole. Meanwhile, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (Madarij al-Salikin, 1996) explains sincerity as the purity of the heart from all motivations other than Allah. He emphasises that sincerity is the spirit of every deed that makes it acceptable. From this point of view, community involvement in ruwatan can be seen as a social deed oriented towards spiritual values they are willing to leave their daily work, bear material losses, and even fulfil the ritual requirements of the dreadlocked child, because of their belief that these actions have religious value and bring Allah's pleasure (Hidayah et al., 2023).

Furthermore, al-Raghib al-Asfahani (Mufradat al-Qur'an, 1991) states that sincerity is the purification of the purpose of deeds so that they are directed solely towards Allah. He emphasises the difference between deeds done for the world and deeds intended for the hereafter. In the context of Ruwatan Rambut Gimbal, it is clear that the community carries out this tradition not only because of cultural factors, but also because of religious beliefs that this ritual is full of prayers and brings blessings. From a contemporary perspective, Quraish Shihab (Wawasan al-Qur'an, 1996) emphasises that sincerity is not merely avoiding *riya*, but also maintaining a balance between intentions, words and deeds. Sincerity, according to him, makes deeds easier to do because they are no longer burdened by external motives (Destriani & Ruhaena, 2024). This is evident in the Dieng community, who readily work together, provide offerings, prepare processions, and welcome tourists to the festival, all done in a spirit of togetherness and sincerity, without expecting anything in return.

This theory of sincerity provides a strong philosophical foundation for understanding socio-cultural phenomena such as ruwatan. First, from al-Ghazali, we understand that sincerity is a filter of intention; community participation can be interpreted as a form of worship intended purely for Allah. Second, from Ibn Qayyim, sincerity becomes the spirit of charity; ruwatan is not just a traditional procession, but is alive because it is based on sincere intentions. Third, from al-Asfahani, sincerity emphasises a difference in orientation; in ruwatan, the orientation towards the hereafter is more dominant than the orientation towards the world. Fourth, according to Quraish Shihab, sincerity is interpreted as a balance between intention, speech, and action; in ruwatan, sincerity is not only present in the heart, but also manifested in concrete collective actions. Thus, the theories of sincerity from these various figures can serve as a framework for in-depth analysis to understand the value of sincerity in the Ruwatan Rambut Gimbal in Dieng. The sincerity of the community is not only a form of obedience to tradition, but also a reflection of spiritual awareness that deeds done together for the sake of goodness have high religious value. This is what makes ruwatan not only a cultural heritage, but also a means of cultural *da'wah* that instils moral, social, and religious values in the lives of the Dieng community (Ahmad et al., 2024).

Thus, these three theories complement each other in explaining the phenomenon of the dreadlocks ritual in Dieng: acculturation theory explains the fusion of Javanese and Islamic cultures that produces a unique ritual form that remains deeply rooted in tradition; Weber's social action theory explains the motivation of sincere values that underpin community participation, where their actions are oriented not only toward material gain but also toward religious, moral, and cultural values; and Berger & Luckmann's social construction theory explains how this tradition survives, is passed down, and is viewed as a legitimate social reality in community life. Furthermore, the combination of these three theories demonstrates that the dreadlocks ritual is not merely a cultural heritage but also the result of a social dialectic between tradition, religion, and modernity. Acculturation has made this tradition open to Islamic influence without losing its essence (Muslim & Mujab, 2022). Social actions demonstrate how people consciously sacrifice their energy, time, and material resources out of the belief that ruwatan brings blessings.

Research findings indicate that the dreadlocks ritual in Dieng Kulon Village embodies sincerity as a core value, manifested in various dimensions. From the pilgrimage to sacred sites, the procession of dreadlocked children to Arjuna Temple, the cleansing with prayer, the hair-cutting ceremony, and the immersion in the waters of Lake Balekambang all these stages are carried out at the expense of the community collectively. Farmers willingly abandon their fields, parents fulfill their children's requests, traditional leaders lead prayers, the younger generation participates as committee members, and even tourism operators support the tradition. This demonstrates that the ruwatan is not merely a cultural ritual, but rather a platform for spiritual values and social integration. From Weber's perspective, this community participation can be read as a rational act, one based not on considerations of economic profit or loss, but rather on a belief in the sacred meaning and safety of the children. Volunteers who work selflessly or farmers who are willing to lose their crops demonstrate that the ruwatan is viewed more as a valuable act (an act laden with value) than an instrumental one. This also aligns with elements of Koentjaraningrat Culture, where religious systems (prayer and mystical beliefs), social systems (mutual cooperation and solidarity), and knowledge systems (local understanding of children with dreadlocks) are interconnected, forming a solid cultural practice.

While previously this value was examined within Weber's framework of social action and elements of Koentjaraningrat Culture, this discussion will deepen it by presenting the perspectives of classical Islamic scholars, namely Al-Ghazali, Ibn Qayyim, and Al-Raghib Al-Asfahani, to understand how sincerity is not only a social ethic but also has religious value. According to Al-Ghazali, sincerity is the purification of intentions so that all deeds are free from worldly interests other

than God. In the context of ruwatan (purification ritual), this is clearly reflected in the sacrifice of time and energy by the community. As Syifa Octa relates, many farmers are willing to abandon their land, even risking damage due to the crowding of crops. From a logistical and economic perspective, this action can be considered detrimental. However, from Al-Ghazali's perspective of sincerity, a process of purifying intentions is evident (Hidayah et al., 2023). They abandon material motivations to prioritize the safety of the dreadlocked children and the smooth running of the ritual over personal interests (Rahmadani, 2021). This collective decision is not simply a social act, but a spiritual practice that demonstrates how society prioritizes transcendent values.

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah added another dimension, namely sincerity as the heart's willingness to do charity without expecting worldly rewards. This can be seen in the tradition of fulfilling children's requests before their hair is cut. Parents do not take into account how big or heavy their child's request is, whether in the form of a small doll or livestock which is quite expensive (Arroisi & Rahmadi, 2022). They still do it without complaining. If analyzed using Weber's perspective, this action might fall into the category of value rational action (rational action based on values). However, if viewed from Ibn Qayyim's perspective, this action shows a clean heart: parents are willing to give without expecting anything in return in the form of material benefits, social status, or praise. They do this simply because they believe that the success of the ritual is determined by the willingness of the heart, and this obedience is a means of maintaining the purity of the tradition and the safety of children (Bosanquet, 2021).

Meanwhile, Al-Raghib Al-Asfahani emphasized sincerity as consistency of heart and charity that unites worldly and spiritual orientations. This perspective is particularly relevant when observing how the younger generation and cultural practitioners (such as Ananda Tiara) continue to preserve the ruwatan tradition, even though it has now been framed within the context of modern festivals like the Dieng Culture Festival. The presence of new events such as jazz above the clouds or the release of lanterns does not erase the spiritual essence of ruwatan. Instead, the value of sincerity is present in their consistency in ensuring that the tradition remains carried out with good intentions, even though it must adapt to changing times. Here, sincerity transcends generations: it is not merely a momentary response, but rather a value that is inherited, transmitted, and practiced continuously, thus maintaining the bridge between local culture and religious values (Ahmad et al., 2024).

When linked to Da'wah bil-Hal, all dimensions of sincerity that emerge in ruwatan can be read as a form of da'wah that is practical, tangible, and non-verbal. First, it becomes da'wah to oneself, as Al-Ghazali analyzed, as the community purifies their intentions from worldly interests to collective worship. Second, it serves as a form of da'wah (Islamic outreach) to the family, as explained through Ibn Qayyim's perspective, where parents educate their children by example about the importance of keeping promises and making selfless sacrifices (L. M. A. Arifin et al., 2022). Third, it serves as a form of da'wah to the wider community and tourists, in line with Al-Raghib Al-Asfahani's view, because the consistent preservation of tradition provides a concrete example of how the value of sincerity is lived out in social life and passed down across generations. Thus, sincerity in ruwatan is not merely a moral or social ethical value, but rather a living da'wah institution. It mediates between faith, social structure, and the continuity of tradition, making ruwatan not only a cultural celebration but also a concrete manifestation of da'wah that is simple, profound, and touching across all levels of society (Abd Rahman et al., 2022). This value also addresses modern criticism that cultural rituals are often considered merely symbolic: in Dieng, these symbols are lived out with sincerity, carried out with a spirit of mutual cooperation, and internalized as worship. This is what makes sincerity in ruwatan remain relevant, while also providing an important lesson that da'wah is not only through words, but also through real actions that are full of meaning. Further, Jindan, (2024) in *Journal of Manners and Culture* studied how Javanese society incorporates da'wah values into their ritual structures. They found that the inclusion of prayers, religious studies, and spiritual meanings in traditions such as a clean village or treatment not only strengthens tradition, but also becomes an effective means of instilling long-lasting religious values. Cultural da'wah is an adaptive approach in a society that still upholds traditional symbols (Hasan, 2020). Thus, the value of sincerity in the dreadlock cleansing ritual in Dieng Kulon is not only evident in symbolic actions, but also in the deeper spiritual, social, and religious meanings shared by the community. This is a concrete form of cultural da'wah that not only strengthens relationships between individuals but also strengthens the vertical relationship between humanity and the Creator. In *Journal of Da'wah Transformation* concluded that traditions carried out with sincerity can be a form of preaching that touches the hearts of the people more effectively than rigid religious rhetoric (Sahiri & Susilo, 2021).

4. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that the value of sincere da'wah is very prominent and deeply rooted in the practice of the Ruwat Rambut Gimbak ritual in Dieng Kulon, Batur District, Banjarnegara Regency. The community does not merely carry out the tradition as a cultural routine, but internalizes it as a manifestation of faith and spiritual devotion. Sincerity is manifested in various forms: from sacrificing time, energy, and materials, to a willingness to carry out the requirements and processions with full awareness and spiritual responsibility. This tradition also serves as clear evidence that da'wah does not always take the form of verbal or lectures, but can be present in the form of exemplary behavior, mutual cooperation, and the preservation of noble values in line with Islamic principles. The value of sincerity in Islam, as embodied in the teachings of monotheism and da'wah ethics, is clearly visible in how the community unites in a single spirit of worship, not

because of coercion, but rather out of a sincere intention to maintain harmony between humans, ancestors, and God. More than just a cultural heritage, the ruwatan ritual becomes a means of cultural da'wah that touches the social, spiritual, and emotional realms of society. In the ruwatan ritual, sincerity transforms into a collective force that enlivens tradition, strengthens local identity, and connects Islamic teachings with cultural wisdom. Therefore, the dreadlocks ritual is not only a sacred symbol, but also an inclusive means of preaching, reaching diverse groups and able to survive the tides of modernization because it is imbued with authentic and sacred values of sincerity..

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